

PRESS RELEASE

9th September 2003
for immediate release

Largest Mosque in Western Europe to open in London

British Ahmadi Muslims will unveil a new magnificent architectural landmark in London next month as Western Europe's biggest Mosque Complex, with capacity to accommodate 10,000 worshippers. Adorned with a 15.5 m dome, the Mosque is located on A24 in Morden, Surrey, on a 5.2 acre site.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the new Worldwide Supreme Head of the Community, will inaugurate the mosque with Friday prayers on 3rd October 2003. British devotees, together with a large contingent of senior community figures from abroad, are expected to fill the Mosque to capacity for the occasion.

The inauguration ceremony will symbolise how Ahmadi Muslims, now spanning to 80 community centres and branches all across the UK, have peacefully coexisted and integrated in Britain for nearly a century.

Mr Rafiq Ahmed Hayat, National UK President of the Community said:

“It’s a second historic occasion for the Ahmadiyya Muslims to add to the heritage of British culture and to the presence of Muslim Community in Britain. We built the very first London Mosque in 1924 which has become a tourist landmark of SW London. This time we have produced the largest and the most sophisticated Mosque in Britain to serve as a landmark for the next century.”

“The Mosque Complex will provide this fast growing British Muslim Community with a central focal point for meetings and social and religious events on a national scale that was no longer possible in the much smaller London Mosque.”

Thursday 2nd October 2003 has been set aside for a Press Conference and a general Press Open Day, as better access for tours, photography and interviews will be available.

END

For appointments and further information, contact:

Dr Basharat Nazir – Press Secretary Telephone 07703 483 384

Email basharat.nazir@btinternet.com Website www.alislam.org

PROGRAMME

Press Day 2nd October 2003

10.30 – 11.30 Guided Tours

11.30 – 12.30 Press Conference

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 18.00 Interviews and further Tours

Inauguration 3rd October 2003

13.00 – 14.30 Friday Prayer

15.30 – 17.00 Tea & Interviews

17.00 – 18.00 Traditional Sweets Distribution

VIP Day 11th October 2003

18.00 – 21.30 Function and Dinner for British & Foreign Ministers, MPs, Mayors, Diplomats, Councillors, Multi-Faith Leaders and Scholars

LOCATION

The Baitul Futuh Mosque

181 London Road

Morden, Surrey SM4 5HF

The Mosque is situated on A24 in Morden, Surrey, located adjacent to the Railway Station 'MORDEN SOUTH' and about 150 yards from the Tube Station 'MORDEN'. Limited car parking is available in areas surrounding the Complex. Within the Complex, parking will be available for the Press on the 2nd and the 11th October. On 3rd October, Park & Ride will be operating with no parking inside the Complex.

PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

Special arrangements have been made for the Press on the eve of the Inauguration on 2nd October, when better access will be available for tours, photography and interviews. Full access to the Press will also be available on the VIP Day on 11th October. On the Inauguration Day on 3rd October, access will be limited due to the Friday Prayer. For security reasons, there will be no admission without prior booking. Before arrival, an appointment must have been confirmed with Dr Basharat Nazir, Press Secretary – Email basharat.nazir@btinternet.com or Telephone 07703 483 384. Identification Badges must be brought which will be matched with the appointment lists for permission to enter. Press-packs will be provided on the Mosque and on the background of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in UK. There will be further press releases and post event reports, video footage and pictures available.

NOTE TO NEWSDESKS

The new mosque is named The Baitul Futuh Mosque. The project was funded entirely by voluntary donations from individual community members. It represents another milestone in the growth of the Ahmadi Muslims worldwide. Arriving on British soil in 1913, they erected the first purpose-built mosque in the London in 1924; in 1982 they were the first to build a mosque in Spain after a lapse of 700 years; and their mosque in Canada is among the biggest in the western world.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian, India, in March 1889. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah as foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, awaited by most world religions. In a little over a century, the Community has spread to 174 countries with 200 million followers from many cultural backgrounds around the world.

The 4th successor to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad passed away in London on 19th April 2003. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the current leader of the Community became his 5th successor on 22nd April 2003. The current Amir UK (National President) is Mr Rafiq Ahmed Hayat.

Ahmadi Muslims are distinguished by their devotion to faith and charity, the exercise of humility in all walks of life and in expounding the message of Islam as a religion of peace and brotherhood to all mankind. The Community wholly rejects the concept of Jihad and conversion by force, and was the first to condemn terrorism and suicide bombings. In fact, the principles of the Community are based on moderation and the rejection of all forms of extremism.

The Community runs a number of hospitals and schools in developing countries and has an active charity, Humanity First, which has helped raise funds for Save the Children, Imperial Cancer Research, and the Great Ormond Street Hospital. During the Holy month of Ramadhan, the Ahmadiyya Youth provides the deprived and homeless with food and provisions throughout the UK. The Community's own 24-hour multi-language satellite TV, MTA International, can be seen in UK/Europe on Sky Digital channel 807.